

From: "Higgins, Craig (NHGRI)" <craigh@exchange.nih.gov>  
To: "Varmus, Harold" <hv2b@nih.gov>  
Cc: "Collins, Francis (NHGRI)" <francisc@exchange.nih.gov>,  
"Hudson, Kathy (NHGRI)" <hudsonk@exchange.nih.gov>  
Subject: Contacts with House and Senate Appropriations on Perkin-Elmer/Venter Announcement  
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At the request of Dr. Collins, I am providing you with a summary of contacts to date with House and Senate Appropriations staff.

Chairman Porter: Both Carol Murphy (Committee staff) and David Sander (Personal staff) called yesterday regarding the recent announcement. They were both calling for information concerning NIH's response in anticipation of inquiries from other Members and staff. Carol's initial comment was that she did not see a problem for HGP funding for FY'99, but saw potential questions being raised for FY'2000. I also spoke with Jack Chow on Chairman Specter's Subcommittee. Jack had not heard from the Chairman on the articles.

I provided a brief oral response in the following areas:

1. Cost comparisons: Press reports are comparing apples to oranges by saying the Government program will cost \$3 billion verses the estimated cost by Venter of \$200 million.
2. Shotgun Sequencing: Important to know that the basic idea has been around for some time. It was been reviewed by the scientific community and was rejected at the time. Advanced understanding and/or technology may yield a different outcome in the future, but that must be demonstrated.
3. Demonstration of Approach: Demonstration of the shotgun sequencing approach proposed will take time, perhaps up to 18 months.
4. Reiteration of the 4 A's: The HGP is still committed to high standards and any proposal for altering the current strategy must be reviewed in the light of those standards.

Copies of the NIH statement that was available at the press conference and the shotgun sequencing articles (Jim Weber and Phillip Green) were faxed to all three parties. I also stated that Dr. Collins would be available to brief the Members should they want a briefing on the issue.

Craig.